

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 35
By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Charles L. Cornelius, Jr.
of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of civic leader, prominent attorney, and former member of the Tennessee House of Representatives, Charles L. Cornelius, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius served with acumen and alacrity as a highly respected Nashville attorney and community leader, in which positions he earned the respect of his peers and superiors alike for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, a direct descendant of Colonel John Donelson, a founder of Nashville, and of Robert Brownlee Currey, Mayor of Nashville from 1822 to 1823, Mr. Cornelius was born on June 26, 1915 in Nashville to Charles L. Cornelius, Sr. and Elizabeth Currey Cornelius; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius was a graduate of Vanderbilt University and Columbia Law School before interrupting his legal career to courageously serve with distinction in the United States Army in the 373rd Field Artillery Battalion, 100th Division, and in the Seventh Army in France and Germany during World War II; and

WHEREAS, his admirable and brave military service during the war earned Mr. Cornelius the rank of Major, and he was awarded a Bronze Star for valor exhibited in connection with military operations against an armed enemy; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius resumed his legal career at the Nashville law firm of Cornelius and Collins, which he founded in 1942 along with his father, Charles L. Cornelius, Sr. and W.

Ovid Collins, Jr.; he was later elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives and was also a delegate to the Tennessee Constitutional Convention in 1956; and

WHEREAS, during his career, Mr. Cornelius served as general counsel for Nashville AAA Auto Club, which his father founded, for State Volunteer Mutual Insurance Company, which he co-founded, for AAA Mid-South Automobile Club, Inc., and for the Tennessee Medical Association for a noteworthy 30 years; he also served as counsel, member of the Board of Directors, and Chairman of the Tennessee Advisory Board for the AAA Auto Club South; and

WHEREAS, as a valued and respected member of the Nashville legal community with an unfaltering interest in bettering his society, Mr. Cornelius was a staunch advocate for improving traffic and safety laws; while representing the Tennessee Medical Association and AAA Auto Club, he was an advocate of laws that would increase traffic and automobile safety; and

WHEREAS, well-known for being the first Nashvillian to have seat belts installed in his own car in 1954, fourteen years before it became a standard safety practice, Mr. Cornelius was instrumental in having the first child restraint law passed in Tennessee, as well as many other important vehicle and child safety laws; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius's dedication to his work was a blessing to the great people of Tennessee, and he served as a model for others; his unending labors for the improvement of vehicle safety and for advocating use of child restraints have no doubt saved thousands of lives of Tennessee men, women, and children and will continue to do so; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his career as a highly regarded attorney and advocate of vehicle safety, Mr. Cornelius served his community in a multitude of other capacities; always active in numerous worthy organizations; he was a 33rd Degree Mason, a member of the Shrine Club, a member of the American College of Trial Lawyers, and a lifetime member of the Judicial Conference of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals; and

WHEREAS, in addition to serving as a secretary of the Tennessee Bar Association and as a fellow of the American Bar Foundation, Mr. Cornelius also served as president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Nashville Exchange Club, and the Nashville Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius's commitment to physical fitness led to his nearly life-long membership and activism in the Young Men's Christian Association where he served as a board member and as a president; in recognition of Mr. Cornelius's service to the organization, he was presented with the esteemed "Man of the Year" award; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius was an active and devout member of the St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, which he served faithfully for many years as a charter member; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his unwavering faith, Mr. Cornelius was also deeply committed to, devoted to, and inspired by his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius was blessed with the loving companionship of Llewellyna Granbery Cornelius for 62 wonderful years and was the proud father of Charles G. Cornelius and his wife Melinda, Llew Cornelius, and Susan C. West and her husband, Steve; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius is also survived by many other beloved family members, including two sisters, Lillian C. Sharp and her husband Robert, and Mary Fleming Cornelius Schmitt, as well as seven beloved grandchildren, Lee, Amy, Christian, and Currey Cornelius, and Mathew, William and Sally West; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius was preceded in death by his parents, Charles L. Cornelius, Sr. and Elizabeth Currey Cornelius, by his sisters, Elizabeth C. Collins, and Jane Cornelius, and also by a brother, William C. Cornelius; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cornelius leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Charles L. Cornelius, Jr., respected attorney and automobile safety advocate, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage, determination, and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Charles L. Cornelius, Jr..

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.